

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 USNATO 02324 062023Z
ACTION ACDA-12

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S E C R E T USNATO 02324

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR
SUBJECT: MBFR: FUTURE WORK PROGRAM

REF: (A) STATE 43183 180002Z FEB 78, (B)STATE 20635
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1. THE SPC HAS BEEN RELATIVELY INDULGENT REGARDING
FURTHER DELAY ON THE US ASSOCIATED MEASURES PAPER,
BUT AS WASHINGTON IS AWARE THERE ARE PRESSURES WITHIN
THE SPC TO BEGIN EXAMINATION OF CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE
WORK PROGRAM AND WE ARE NOT SANGUINE ABOUT TOTALLY
CONTAINING THESE PRESSURES BEYOND MARCH. OUR CURRENT
GUIDANCE (REFTELS) LEAVES THE US OPPOSING ALL ITEMS
CURRENTLY ON THE SPC AGENDA: WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE
BETTER TO BE MODERATELY FORTHCOMING IN AT LEAST ONE AREA,
FOR EXAMPLE, THE AVERAGE MANNING LEVEL (AML) PAPER
(AS PARA 4, REF A SUGGESTS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE). OUR

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 USNATO 02324 062023Z

MAIN CONCERN IS THAT AN ACROSS-THE-BOARD "GO-SLOW"
APPROACH IN THE SPC COULD HAVE A NEGATIVE TACTICAL
REPERCUSSION WHEN WE ATTEMPT TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE
ALLIED INITIATIVE.

2. PER REF A, US REP INFORMED THE SPC ON MARCH 2
THAT THE US STABILIZING MEASURES/VERIFICATION PAPER

WOULD BE DELAYED UNTIL THE END OF MARCH (I.E. SIX WEEKS FROM THE RECEIPT OF REF A). UK, BELGIAN AND CANADIAN REPS SUPPORTED US REQUEST TO DEFER WORK ON ASSOCIATED MEASURES UNTIL THAT TIME. HOWEVER, THE DUTCH, FRG, AND BELGIAN REPS URGED THAT THE SPC CONSIDER INITIATING DISCUSSION ON OTHER WORK PROGRAM TOPICS WHILE AWAITING THE US CONTRIBUTION. THE BELGIAN REP SUGGESTED THE SPC COULD TAKE UP THE PURELY POLITICAL ISSUES SUCH AS "THE FORM OF THE AGREEMENT" OR THE "LINKAGE QUESTION" (PARA 4(B) AND (C) OF ANNEX II TO C-M(77)96). THE HEAD OF THE MBFR STAFF GROUP (DUBUISSON) ALSO ASKED WHETHER WORKING GROUP COULD COMMENCE WORK ON ANY OF THE "PURELY TECHNICAL" ISSUES ON THE WORK PROGRAM.

3. THIS DISCUSSION IS TO BE PURSUED AT THE NEXT SPC MEETING MARCH 9. PER REF A, WE WILL CONTINUE TO SEEK TO DEFER SPC CONSIDERATION OF OTHER ITEMS ON THE WORK PROGRAM. HOWEVER, AS NOTED IN PARA 1, AND IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS, THE SPC IS INCREASINGLY LIKELY TO CONCENTRATE ITS ATTENTION ON THE WORK PROGRAM. IN THIS REGARD, WE SHOULD POINT OUT THAT THE SPC DOES NOT WHOLLY SHARE THE INTERPRETATION OF THE NAC GUIDANCE CONTAINED IN PARA 3 OF REF A. THE FOOTNOTE TO ANNEX II WAS INSERTED TO ENSURE THAT THE TABLING OF THE ALLIED INITIATIVE, WHICH THEN APPEARED IMMINENT, WOULD NOT BE CONTINGENT UPON THE COMPLETION OF A MULTITUDE OF STUDIES

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 USNATO 02324 062023Z

(USNATO 11352, PARA 3). WE DO NOT RECALL THAT THE REVERSE LINKAGE (I.E. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDIES WOULD BE CONTINGENT UPON TABLING THE INITIATIVE) WAS MEANT TO BE IMPLIED BY THAT LANGUAGE AND WE SUSPECT THAT ANY ARGUMENTATION ALONG THIS LINE WOULD BE STRONGLY CHALLENGED IN THE SPC.

4. THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE AD HOC GROUP (AT ITS NEXT BRIEFING ON MARCH 10) WILL REQUEST FURTHER GUIDANCE ON THE DATA EXCHANGE QUESTION, BUT THIS PROBABLY WILL NOT DIVERT THE SPC ENTIRELY FROM THE MAIN ISSUE NOTED ABOVE. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL, THEREFORE, AND TO OUR TACTICAL ADVANTAGE, IF THE DELIVERY DATE FOR THE ASSOCIATED MEASURES PAPER DID NOT SLIP BEYOND THE END OF THE MONTH AND IF WASHINGTON COULD ALSO PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON THE AML PAPER BY MID-MARCH. BENNETT

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